

# EXHIBIT 3

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## Destiny 2's Biggest Problem is Player Paranoia

Lack of content and meaningful rewards is something Destiny 2 has shown it can fix, but the player paranoia could end up killing the game.

BY ANTHONY TAORMINA PUBLISHED APR 19, 2020



It's no secret that *Destiny 2* has a rampant cheating problem on PC. Looking at forums, community message boards, subreddits, YouTube, and even livestreams shows that Bungie is struggling to keep hacking and cheating out of its PvP experiences, and in a lot of cases it's ruining the game for people. However, the rampant cheating is also completely changing the personality of the average *Destiny 2* player as well.

Prior to the move to Steam and the addition of *Destiny 2: New Light*, there were a few cheaters here or there, but not enough to be noticeable. Crucible matches were fairly equal across both console and PC, at least as far as the experience was concerned.

Then, Bungie split from Activision and moved *Destiny 2* to Steam, which eliminated the backbone of Battle Net's anti-cheat software. On its own, this might have been the first step towards cheating, but things were made worse by the introduction of free-to-play. Without a monetary barrier between players and PvP, *Destiny 2* became overrun with cheaters on PC.

### Destiny 2 and Cheating

Cheating might just be one of the many problems affecting *Destiny 2* right now, but it seems to be the one that is most drastically impacting the mode of players. As well, the cheating in *Destiny 2* is turning players paranoid, which is leading to a general sense of unease about the game overall.

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In the days prior to Steam and New Light, if an opponent hit an impressive headshot or made a great play, they were respected for their skill. Trials of the Nine (and Trials of Osiris in *Destiny 1*) became a spectator sport, as viewers saw the top *Destiny 2* players show off their skill. It's part of the reason that so many were desperate to see Trials return to *D2* in its original form – to experience high intensity games where skill gave anyone a chance at winning.

Now, any impressive play by an opponent is immediately under suspicion. If a player hits a crazy headshot from what seems like an impossible angle there is the immediate question of whether they are using an aimbot or wall hack. Even opponents that might simply be lucky are instead instantly labeled as cheaters and reported in *Destiny 2* and on their Steam profile.

### **Paranoia Among the D2 Community**

Some *Destiny 2* players try to give their opponents the benefit of the doubt based on their Steam profile – i.e. a more active profile is less suspicious than a brand new one – but there is still a constant sense of paranoia across the Crucible. Tune into any *Destiny 2* streamer on Twitch and you are likely to hear some doubt enter their mind anytime they start losing. Yes, there are plenty of players out there that are capable of beating a “*Destiny 2* streamer,” but those content creators' feelings represent the game's issues overall. It is impossible to know for sure and in a game where one click on an opponent's head can turn the tide of a match, there are going to be suspicions now.

Obviously, there are cheaters in *Destiny 2* that make their methods a lot more blatant. Some hover in the air and teleport to a player's location like Harry Potter or an AC-130. While others gain Super energy instantly and fire endless Nova Bombs through the ground. Occasionally, cheaters will even take away a player's gun. Those are the players that make the regular folks quit *Destiny 2* and move on, but they at least are obvious.

### **Can Bungie Fix This?**

What is truly causing problems for *Destiny 2* in the Crucible are the aimbotters or wall hackers that only use it to gain a slight advantage. It's just enough to get a win, but not blatant enough for everyone to take notice. Most will simply think that their opponent is really good at sniping or got lucky. But eventually, after a few too many accurate headshots in a row, the doubt starts to creep in.

 hunter titan warlock pvp

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The best counter to the *Destiny 2* suspicion problem is to look at an opponent's stats and their accuracy. Anything in the 90% or higher range is likely someone abusing the system to gain an unfair advantage.

It might not be as bad as the Curse of Osiris days because cheating is less common (and less possible) on console, but this is also a problem that's going to be harder for Bungie to fix. Because the developer doesn't want to be as transparent about its banning and anti-cheat measures, many wonder if anything is actually being done to curb this type of behavior.

PvE players have a pretty good sense of what needs to be done in order to bring them back – better rewards, more content, challenging endgame. PvP players are having a hard time investing in the game at a time when they were supposed to be the focus. Frustration is one thing, but when a game is altering players' moods and making them suspicious of everything, earning back that trust is a lot more difficult.

***Destiny 2*** is available now for PC, PS4, Stadia, and Xbox One.



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**Anthony Taormina**

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An owner of every console since Atari, Anthony is willing to try any video game, good or bad, but prefers the ones that involve a deep and involving story. With the Ocarina of Time gladly sitting as his favorite game of all time, Anthony is a sucker for any game that has players wielding a fabled sword, but can still appreciate everything from a solid sports title to a game with a deep multiplayer experience. By eventually combining...

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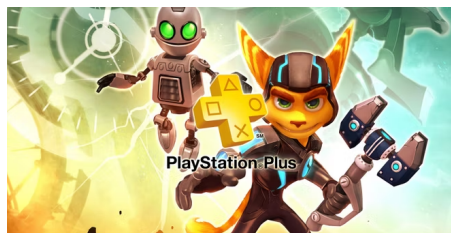
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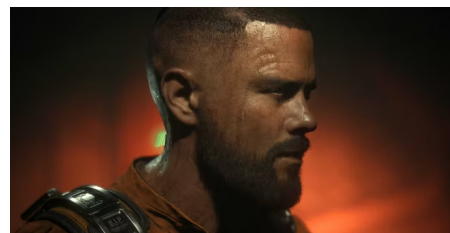
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EDITORS' PICK

# Anger Over 'Destiny 2' PC Cheaters Has Reached A Tipping Point

**Paul Tassi** Senior Contributor*News and opinion about video games, television, movies and the internet.*[Follow](#)

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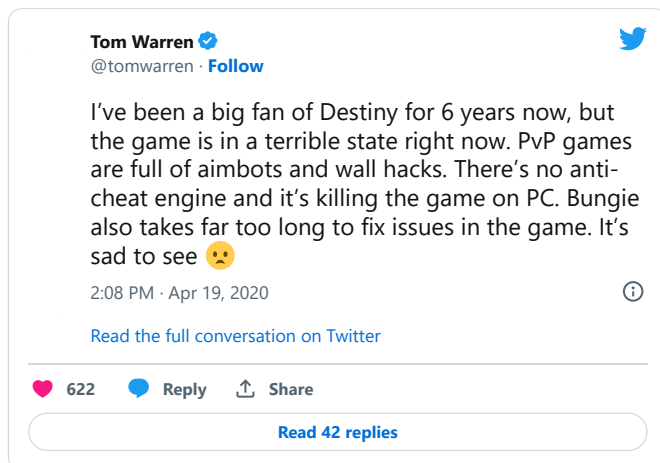
While cheating has been a problem on the PC version of Destiny 2 for months, the switch to Steam and the recent release of Trials have taken the problem to a new level, and it is currently decimating PvP on the platform.

But in recent days, it seems like enough has been enough for many high profile players, who are either announcing their departure from Destiny or publicly chastising Bungie.

Here's top PvP player and YouTuber Mtashed, whose experience with cheaters and error codes are forcing him to make tough decision about continuing to grind Destiny.



And here's Tom Warren, not a content creator, but rather the senior editor of The Verge and a big Destiny player:



The most intense words I've seen so far have come from Gigz, the type of top-tier player who essentially embodies the entire mode of Trials, but he's immensely frustrated with the current state of the game on PC:

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Bungie has only briefly addressed security concerns, and for the most part, has just pressed on with other releases as usual. Community Manager DMG [has previously said](#) that the narrative that Destiny 2 does not have any sort of anti-cheat in place is false, but the response from the community has been essentially a collective GIF of Ron Burgundy saying “I don’t believe you.”

While Bungie no doubt has *some* level of anti-cheat measure in place, they do not have a system like Valorant, where the anti-cheat is essentially running at all times. Nor do they implement things like preventing players with VAC bans from playing Trials.



Destiny 2 BUNGIE

Cheating in Destiny can either be super obvious, like teleporting players spamming sniper rifles like they’re machine guns, or it can be more subtle. Something as breezy as a simple wall hack that lets you hit a lot more of your sniper shots. A recent [“interview with a hacker”](#) focused on that kind of hack, where the player claimed that he and his friends had been using those sort of “subtle” cheats in Trials and other modes for months and hadn’t been caught at all.

Cheating, of course, is not unique to Destiny 2. Hacking has gotten so bad in Call of Duty: Warzone that some players are trying to [turn off cross play on console](#) to escape PC cheaters. But it’s been persistently bad in Destiny for months now, and is only getting worse in time.

I don’t know what the answer is here. I think Bungie needs to talk about cheating more often and acknowledge what a serious issue it is, but they’re sort of stuck because they don’t want to get *too* much into detail about their behind the scenes measures. But I think until there is some sort of more robust, more forward-facing anti-cheat, these conversations will not die down. And it isn’t just harsh words from high profile players,



you can see it in the numbers. Only 3.5% of Steam players are playing Trials right now compared to 7.8% of PS4 players and 6.3% of Xbox players, and it's been like this for weeks now.

BETA

Something needs to change, and quickly. Working from home may be delaying further, more aggressive measures, but Trials is being gutted on PC for many players right now, and there's no sign of that letting up any time soon without further changes.

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# Destiny 2 cheating up 50% since January, Bungie highlights Trials improvements

*Bungie looks to address community concerns over the next several weeks*

By [Ryan Gilliam](#) | [@RyGilliam](#) | Apr 24, 2020, 2:30pm EDT

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Image: Bungie

[Destiny 2](#) finally revived the long-dormant [Trials of Osiris this season](#). But the signature PvP mode has been more of a frustration point for players this season than a joyful return. In an effort to be more transparent around the problems currently facing [Destiny 2](#), [Bungie opened up](#) about its plans to fix Trials of Osiris in the coming seasons.

One of the biggest issues facing Trials, where the goal is to win as many games as possible before losing three, is an army of cheaters. According to Destiny engineering director David Aldridge, cheating is up 50% in [Destiny 2](#) since January, and that number only increases at higher skill levels. This increase in cheaters seems to be a mix of Trials-based incentives to win and the game's [introduction into the free-to-play market](#) late last year.

Aldridge went into Bungie uses anti-cheat, and announced the studio has tripled its pre-Season of the Worthy weekly ban numbers. Without getting too technical, most cheating happens on PC via memory-poking attacks, aimbots, wallhacks, and lag switching — but denial of service attacks has been effectively eliminated, according to Bungie. Console players mostly face DDoS attacks and lag switching.



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A Warlock battling in Trials of Osiris | Image: Bungie



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Bungie has a few initiatives in place to combat the army of new cheaters. First, the studio is shifting current workers onto the cheater problem, further developing its anti-cheat, and making it easier to ban rampant cheaters. The studio is also making players aware of a new policy change: Bungie will now punish non-cheating players in the fireteam of a cheater.

"We now reserve the right to restrict or ban any player who has benefited from cheating, even if they didn't cheat themselves," said Aldridge. "This includes scenarios where players group up with or provide account information to a guide or carry service, which then cheats on their behalf. [...] If you ride [a cheater] to a flawless, the Banhammer will come for you as well."

This new restriction only seems to apply to premade groups, so players shouldn't have to worry about getting banned for randomly matching with a cheater — Trials only lets you matchmake with a complete Fireteam. Additionally, Bungie is looking into instituting a time investment requirement to even queue up for Trials. Bungie suggests a possible requirement of 100 *Destiny 2* hours played on a single account. While this would limit the amount of players able to compete in Trials, it helps ensure banned players can't just start another account and jump into more matches.

"If we're forced to choose, we will choose for Trials to be a sacred space, even if that means fewer people can play," said Aldridge.



Saint-14, the Trials of Osiris token vendor | Image: Bungie

But Trials of Osiris has reward problems in addition to rampant cheating. When players earn a new reward in Trials of Osiris, they can earn tokens during a match and turn them into Saint-14. Saint will then drop one of that player's already earned rewards, letting hardcore Guardians go for the perfect rolls on Trials guns. It's a good idea with a major problem: The best way to farm tokens is off the first three matches on a card, when matchmaking isn't as strict and games are typically easier.

To grind tokens, some of the game's best players are getting a few wins against easy opponents and then resetting their card to do it again. This results in a lot of frustration for average Joes, some of whom are struggling to get a single reward out of Trials of Osiris during any given week. We've witnessed this problem firsthand in our own Trials games, and it's a frustrating roadblock to try and navigate around.

To fix this issue, Bungie will add a new token payout system next season. At three wins, five wins, and seven wins, players will get a significant drop of tokens to spend at Saint-14 — increased further with the Bonus Tokens Passage players can use. Ideally this will keep hardcore players running later cards, even if it's not as surefire as grinding easy games.

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But Bungie is also adding something to help players stuck at one or two wins — those beat down by the token grinders mentioned above. Coming soon, players will get a new, weekly bounty that does not require players to win Trials matches, only play them. The reward will be the same gear piece players automatically earn from winning three Trials matches on a single card. The goal is that more players will jump in every week and come out with something to show for it.

Finally, Bungie is looking into adding "Adept weapons" for players that go flawless. Similar to the Adept system in the original *Destiny* — where players could get slightly better and cooler looking versions of Trials of Osiris weapons — these rewards are only for flawless players (seven wins without a single loss). Bungie's current plan is to offer custom-built weapon mods for these guns only, although development sounds early and the studio admitted nothing is set in stone.

According to its weekly blog post, Bungie plans to address more *Destiny 2* problems in the coming weeks. On April 30, the studio will reveal what it's learned from its new seasonal model, and plans to address some of its clear issues.

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